

calls this latest version the Energy Consumers Relief Act, an Orwellian name if there ever was one, deceptively titled as Congress heads for recess, but the title does not reflect reality. This bill more aptly might be called the Blocking Public Health Protections Act.

Shamefully, this is yet another attempt by the majority to gut public health and safety protections so they can give more handouts to big energy producers, many of which of course have financed the majority in this House.

Not only does this bill block or delay the EPA from finalizing rules, Madam Chairman, to reduce pollution that threatens the air we breathe and the water we drink. It also gives unprecedented power, as the distinguished ranking member of the committee pointed out, to the Department of Energy to veto EPA rules—nonsensical and a non sequitur if there ever was one.

We know rules already in place, like the mercury and air toxic standards that effectively regulate carcinogens, neurotoxins, smog and soot pollution, prevent up to 11,000 premature deaths, 47 heart attacks, and 130,000 asthma attacks every year. So I ask my colleagues: Why are we trying to prevent proven protections on public health?

Our amendment will continue to put public health first by ensuring that EPA retains that authority to implement the vital safeguards that protect air and water quality that previous generations in this House on a bipartisan basis believed were necessary and important to protect the public we serve.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY).

The question was taken; and the Chair announced that the yeas appeared to have it.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Madam Chair, I demand a recorded vote.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Virginia will be postponed.

Mr. WHITFIELD. Madam Chair, I move that the Committee do now rise. The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. LANKFORD) having assumed the chair, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Chair of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1582) to protect consumers by prohibiting the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency from promulgating as final certain energy-related rules that are estimated to cost more than \$1 billion and will cause significant adverse effects to the economy, had come to no resolution thereon.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair

will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote incurs objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later.

□ 1945

#### VIETNAM HUMAN RIGHTS ACT OF 2013

Mr. ROYCE. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1897) to promote freedom and democracy in Vietnam.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1897

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the “Vietnam Human Rights Act of 2013”.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

Sec. 2. Findings and purpose.

Sec. 3. Prohibition on increased non-humanitarian assistance to the Government of Vietnam.

Sec. 4. United States public diplomacy.

Sec. 5. United Nations Human Rights Council.

Sec. 6. Annual report.

#### SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(1) The relationship between the United States and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam has grown substantially since the end of the trade embargo in 1994, with annual trade between the two countries reaching nearly \$25,000,000,000 in 2012.

(2) The Government of Vietnam’s transition toward greater economic freedom and trade has not been matched by greater political freedom and substantial improvements in basic human rights for Vietnamese citizens, including freedom of religion, expression, association, and assembly.

(3) The United States Congress agreed to Vietnam becoming an official member of the World Trade Organization in 2006, amidst assurances that the Government of Vietnam was steadily improving its human rights record and would continue to do so.

(4) Vietnam remains a one-party state, ruled and controlled by the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV), which continues to deny the right of citizens to change their Government.

(5) Although in recent years the National Assembly of Vietnam has played an increasingly active role as a forum for highlighting local concerns, corruption, and inefficiency, the National Assembly remains subject to the direction of the CPV and the CPV maintains control over the selection of candidates in national and local elections.

(6) The Government of Vietnam forbids public challenge to the legitimacy of the one-party state, restricts freedoms of opinion, the press, and association and tightly limits access to the Internet and telecommunication.

(7) Since Vietnam’s accession to the WTO on January 11, 2007, the Government of Vietnam arbitrarily arrested and detained numerous individuals for their peaceful advocacy of religious freedom, democracy, and human rights, including Father Nguyen Van Ly, human rights lawyers Nguyen Van Dai,

Le Thi Cong Nhan, Cu Huy Ha Vu, and Le Cong Dinh, and bloggers Nguyen Van Hai, Ta Phong Tan, and Le Van Son.

(8) The Government of Vietnam continues to detain, imprison, place under house arrest, convict, or otherwise restrict persons for the peaceful expression of dissenting political or religious views.

(9) The Government of Vietnam continues to detain labor leaders and restricts the right to organize independently.

(10) The Government of Vietnam continues to limit the freedom of religion, restrict the operations of independent religious organizations, and persecute believers whose religious activities the Government regards as a potential threat to its monopoly on power.

(11) Despite reported progress in church openings and legal registrations of religious venues, the Government of Vietnam has halted most positive actions since the Department of State lifted the “country of particular concern” (CPC) designation for Vietnam in November 2006.

(12) Unregistered ethnic minority Protestant congregations, particularly Montagnards in the Central and Northwest Highlands, suffer severe abuses because of actions by the Government of Vietnam, which have included forced renunciations of faith, arrest and harassment, the withholding of social programs provided for the general population, confiscation and destruction of property, subjection to severe beatings, and reported deaths.

(13) There has been a pattern of violent responses by the Government to peaceful prayer vigils and demonstrations by Catholics for the return of Government-confiscated church properties. Protesters have been harassed, beaten, and detained and church properties have been destroyed. Catholics also continue to face some restrictions on selection of clergy, the establishment of seminaries and seminary candidates, and individual cases of travel and church registration.

(14) In May 2010 the village of Con Dau, a Catholic parish in Da Nang, faced escalated violence during a funeral procession as police attempted to prohibit a religious burial in the village cemetery; more than 100 villagers were injured, 62 were arrested, five were tortured, and at least three died.

(15) The Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam (UBCV) suffers persecution as the Government of Vietnam continues to restrict contacts and movement of senior UBCV clergy for refusing to join the state-sponsored Buddhist organization, the Government restricts expression and assembly, and the Government continues to harass and threaten UBCV monks, nuns, and youth leaders.

(16) The Government of Vietnam continues to suppress the activities of other religious adherents, including Cao Dai and Hoa Hao Buddhists who lack official recognition or have chosen not to affiliate with the state-sanctioned groups, including through the use of detention, imprisonment, and strict Government oversight.

(17) Many Montagnards and others are still serving long prison sentences for their involvement in peaceful demonstrations in 2001, 2002, 2004, and 2008. Montagnards continue to face threats, detention, beatings, forced renunciation of faith, property destruction, restricted movement, and reported deaths at the hands of Government officials.

(18) Ethnic minority Hmong in Northern Vietnam, the Northwest Highlands, and the Central Highlands of Vietnam also suffer restrictions, confiscation of property, abuses,